

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 /072 W

----- 016471

R 141443Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4872

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 512

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, LT, CH, TW

SUBJECT: GOL FOREIGN MINISTER VISIT TO PRC

REF: MASERU 296 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: LESOTHO FOREIGN MINISTER J.R.L. KOTSOKOANE DEPARTED TODAY FOR TWO-WEEK VISIT TO MAINLAND CHINA AT INVITATION OF PRC GOVERNMENT. HE ACCOMPANIED BY WIFE; SENIOR PRIVATE SECRETARY TO PRIME MINISTER, C.M. MOLAPO; AND NEWLY APPOINTED PERMANENT SECRETARY TO MINISTER TO PRIME MINISTER, MRS. THERESA NTSANE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: GOL ANNOUNCED VISIT LESS THAN 24 HOURS BEFORE KOTSOKOANE'S DEPARTURE, APPARENTLY BECAUSE DISSENSION WITHIN GOVERNMENT OVER WHETHER VISIT SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT ALL. ROC AMBASSADOR TA-JEN LIEU CALLED AT EMBASSY THIS MORNING AND PROVIDED ACCOUNT CONTAINED IN FOLLOWING TWO PARAGRAPHS.

3. KOTSOKOANE HAS HAD INVITATION FOR SOME TIME (C.F. REFTTEL) BUT PRIME MINISTER PUT OFF MAKING DECISION ON ACCEPTANCE UNTIL AFTER RETURN FROM COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE ON MAY 6. IN NEXT CABINET MEETING, MINISTERS SPLIT BADLY OVER PROPOSED VISIT, WITH
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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MASERIBANE, MINISTER FINANCE SEKHONYANA,

AND MINISTER INTERIOR MONALELI ADAMANTLY OPPOSED AND MINISTER AGRICULTURE RAKHETLA, MINISTER COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MOITSE, AND KOTSOKOANE IN FAVOR. PM DECIDED IN FAVOR OF VISIT ON BASIS OF ARGUMENT PUT FORTH BY KOTSOKOANE THAT HE WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VISIT TO UNDERMINE ALLEGED PRC SUPPORT FOR OPPOSITION BASUTOLAND CONGRESS PARTY (BC). PM ALSO IMPOSED CONDITION, OVER KOTSOKOANE'S HEATED OPPOSITION, THAT MOLAPO AND NTSANE SHOULD ACCOMPANY KOTSOKOANE, PRESUMABLY AS WATCHDOGS.

4. AMBASSADOR LIEU CALLED ON PM TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER VISIT. PM ASSURED LIEU THAT VISIT IMPLIED NO CHANGE IN FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN LESOTHO AND TAIWAN AND PROMISED TO SEND MINISTER TO PRIME MINISTER MANYELI AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF RULING BASUTOLAND NATIONAL PARTY MASUPHA KATISO TO TAIWAN SOON TO COUNTERBALANCE EFFECTS OF KOTSOKOANE VISIT TO PRC. LIEU ADVISED PM THAT IF LESOTHO ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH OR ACCEPTED AID FROM PRC, RESULT WOULD BE CLOSURE OF ROC MISSION IN LESOTHO.

5. KOTSOKOANE VISIT TO PRC APPARENTLY HAS CAUSED DIVISION NOT ONLY IN CABINET BUT ALSO IN SECOND ECHELON OF BNP. IN PAST TWO WEEKS, UNSIGNED MIMEOGRAPHED PAMPHLETS, WHICH ARE BELIEVED TO BE PREPARED BY ANTI-COMMUNIST MEMBERS OF BNP AND WHICH STRONGLY CONDEMN RUMORED VISIT, HAVE APPEARED ON STREETS OF MASERU.

6. AMBASSADOR LIEU, ALTHOUGH NOT EXCITABLE TYPE, IS NEVERTHELESS QUITE CONCERNED THAT KOTSOKOANE'S VISIT TO PRC MAY PORTEND CHANGE IN GOL ATTITUDE TOWARD TWO CHINAS. HE DOES NOT TRUST KOTSOKOANE AND BELIEVES THAT ONCE INSIDE MAINLAND CHINA HE WILL EASILY SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM HIS WATCHDOGS AND GO HIS OWN WAY. LIU ALSO SAID HE HAS RECENTLY OVERHEARD CONVERSATION IN WHICH KOTSOKOANE REMARKED THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA PROVE THAT UNITED STATES CANNOT BE RELIED ON AND THAT MAINLAND CHINA AND RUSSIA ARE ONLY TWO BIG COUNTRIES WHICH CAN BE TRUSTED. LIU ALSO BELIEVES KOTSOKOANE VISIT MAY BE PART OF PATTERN OF INCREASING TIES BETWEEN LESOTHO AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

7. COMMENT: AS EMBASSY HAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, GOL IS LIKELY TO FEEL INCREASINGLY DRAWN TOWARD OAU AND OTHER THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, INCLUDING PRC. THIS TENDENCY IS COUNTERBALANCED BY ANTI-COMMUNIST BELIEFS OF MAJORITY OF PRESENT LEADERS AND GOL'S CONFIDENTIAL

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DESIRE TO MAINTAIN WARM RELATIONS WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES AND ACCESS TO THEIR ASSISTANCE. IT IS TOO SOON TO SAY WHETHER KOTSO-KOANE VISIT SIGNIFIES A LONG STEP TOWARD CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN LESOTHO AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. IF DIVISION IN CABINET OVER VISIT IS AS SHARP AS AMBASSADOR LIU REPORTED, INCIDENT COULD HAVE OPPOSITE EFFECT; THOSE MINISTERS WHO REPORTEDLY OPPOSED VISIT ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE POWERFUL WITHIN RULING BASUTOLAND NATIONAL PARTY THAN THOSE WHO FAVORED.

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